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ABSTRACT

Arguing that there is a growing gap between the goal of providing equal educational opportunity for Blacks and Hispanics in postsecondary education in California, and the state's past and projected ability to reach that goal, this report examines the extent of the dual problem of underpreparation and underparticipation of Black and Hispanic community college students; and the major cooperative opportunity that exists within new legislative requirements. Following introductory comments, the paper reviews research findings concerning the racial and ethnic composition of California's population; the participation rates of minorities in the educational continuum; the transfer rates of Black and Hispanic students from two- to four-year colleges; and the effects of community college enrollment reductions on this student flow problem. Next, information from a national invitational colloquium hosted by the College Board is cited, providing a statistical overview of unemployment rates, educational participation, persistence rates at the postsecondary level, and discipline representation for Black students. Finally, a history of legislative efforts to improve the quality of academic preparation for postsecondary education and to maintain the representative participation of lower income and minority groups is presented, with special focus on Assembly Concurrent Resolution 83, which calls for a strengthening of the college preparation of low-income and minority students and an expansion of the academic and support services required to increase transfer and graduation rates among these groups. Statistical data are appended. (LAL)

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Board of Governors of the
California Community Colleges

March 7, 1985

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March 8, 1985

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Sacramento Room
1100 Fourteenth Street
Sacramento, California

CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Gerald Hayward

PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION OF HISPANIC AND BLACK STUDENTS: A SPECIAL REPORT

JC 850 093

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PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION OF HISPANIC AND BLACK STUDENTS: A SPECIAL REPORT

During the past several months, the publication of various research reports, staff activities and participation in conferences, and increased legislative requests for student equity plans have served to place in a new context the question of California's ability to provide access to and retention in post-secondary education for historically underrepresented Hispanic and Black students.

These publications, activities, and legislative requests serve as indices of a growing gap between the goal of providing equal opportunity for Blacks and Hispanics in postsecondary education and the state's past and projected ability to reach that goal. In light of enrollment and population projections for California over the next 15 years, the need to bring the ideal closer to reality presents a real challenge to postsecondary educators generally, and to community colleges in particular, given the community colleges' role as the primary port of entry for most Californians pursuing a postsecondary education.

We propose to briefly outline the extent of the dual problem of underpreparation and underparticipation through selected findings from various studies and reports, from conferences, and through the identification of a major cooperative opportunity that exists within the requirements of Assembly Concurrent Resolution (ACR) 83. Additionally, we will suggest some options for action on the part of community colleges.

What Recent Reports Tell Us

California's population, like that of the nation as a whole, is becoming more racially diverse and made up of increasing numbers of ethnic minorities. According to a demographic report prepared by the American Council on Education, in all but two of the 25 largest school systems in the nation more than half of the students are from ethnic minority groups. According to some projections, including those of Hal Hodgkinson whom the Board heard in 1984, by the year 2000, California will likely have a minority of white residents. While this change is taking place, the participation of minorities in the educational continuum, especially Hispanics and Blacks, has consistently been below the level of participation for other groups. A recent report by the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) on high school eligibility rates points to two aspects of this continued decline in participation. Hispanic and Black high school students, who survive to the ninth grade, experience a dramatic "drop-out" before they become graduates. Only two of every three Hispanic and Black ninth graders actually graduate from high school (see Appendix A). Once this significantly smaller number of students graduate their eligibility to attend the University of California (UC) and the California State University (CSU) is distinctly less than the eligibility of the average high school graduate. The CPEC study concluded that:

> "Among all major ethnic groups, Black graduates are least likely to meet the University's and State University's admission standards,"

and:

> "Hispanic High School graduates are eligible to the University and State University at rates below the nationwide average."

The appended charts from another CPEC report, "Population and Enrollment Trends: 1985-2000," graphically tell the story (see Appendices B and C).

When these lamentable graduation and eligibility rates are related to actual participation rates in community colleges and the four-year segments there is little wonder that the transfer rate of Black and Hispanic students continues to lag behind those of other students. As reported to the Board in the October 1984 report on "Transfer Education," although Hispanics and Blacks comprised respectively 13.4 percent and 10.6 percent of 1981 full-time students, by 1983 only 4.2 percent and 9.0 percent, respectively, transfer to UC (6.6 percent and 9.5 percent to CSU).

Community college enrollment reductions in fall 1983 and fall 1984 will only serve to exacerbate this student flow problem. As reported elsewhere in this agenda, enrollment reductions for fall 1984 were concentrated in urban areas and particularly among those colleges with high enrollment of Hispanics and Blacks, with Black students being the most disproportionately affected by enrollment losses. The latest update of community college transfer statistics prepared by CPEC compares fall 1983 transfers with fall 1984 and finds there was a less than one percent drop in overall transfers (UC, 48 students; CSU, 140 students). That reduction was attributable to decreases among Black and Caucasian transfer students. The marked reductions in community college enrollments in fall 1983 and fall 1984 does not augur well for increased numbers of community college transfers two-to-three years from those dates.

A Problem of National Concern

Stimulated by projections of increased minority presence in the national demographic picture and the increasing trend toward greater reliance on excellence indicators, a national debate has begun about the place of equity within what has been called the "excellence agenda." This agenda has been most seminally outlined in the provocative report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education: "A Nation At Risk," and reinforced by no less than 117 national, regional or state reports concerned with improving academic performance and teacher quality.

A recent nationwide invitational colloquium hosted by the College Board helped to identify the outlines of the national picture for Black students at both the K-12 and postsecondary levels. From a paper commissioned by the College Board specifically for the colloquium, Linda Darling-Hammond, a senior researcher with the Rand Corporation, makes the following context conclusions:

> "o Unemployment rates and labor force participation rates are strongly correlated with educational attainment for both blacks and whites. However for blacks, marked differences in employability occur only for those with a college degree.

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- Unemployment rates for black men and women in virtually all age categories have increased fairly steadily since 1965. In 1982-83, about 1 out of every 5 blacks in the labor market were unemployed, with much higher rates for teenagers and young adults."

In terms of educational participation:

"o Blacks lose ground relative to non-blacks at each stage of the educational pipeline. In 1972, for example, blacks represented 12.7 percent of all 18 year olds, 10.5 percent of all 1972 high school graduates, 8.7 percent of all college freshmen, and, four years later, 6.5 percent of all B.A. recipients. By 1979, blacks represented only about 4 percent of all professional and doctoral degree recipients.

- Blacks are seriously underrepresented among graduate and professional school students, and black participation rates in postgraduate education have declined since the early 1970's."

And at the postsecondary level:

"o At the undergraduate level, 42 percent of black college students were enrolled in 2-year colleges in 1980. Persistence rates for 2-year college students are much lower than they are for students attending 4-year colleges, particularly for black students.

- Financial aid has a great effect on college retention rates, particularly for black students, who are nearly twice as likely to stay in 4-year colleges with aid than without. The importance of financial aid for black students is apparent, considering that in 1981, 48 percent of black college-bound seniors came from families with incomes under $12,000, as compared to only 10 percent of their white counterparts.

- Increasing proportions of blacks and women are represented in disciplines like business and management and in math- and science-related fields. However, black degrees are still concentrated in education, humanities, and the social sciences where salaries are lowest and unemployment rates highest."

While these conclusions cover Blacks, each of these indices could easily be applied to the Hispanic minority, and with even greater impact, except in the case of unemployment rate figures.

Legislative Concern With Equity: The Promise of ACR 83

Over the last several years, the Legislature has, through statute and resolution, expressed its interest in improving the quality of academic preparation for postsecondary education and in maintaining representative participation of lower income and minority groups in postsecondary institutions. Ten years ago, ACR 151 (Hughes) established goals for minority student participation in

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postsecondary education on parity with the percentages of minority student high school graduates. The year 1980 was established as the date when such parity was to be achieved. This did not occur.

In Senate Bill 813 (Hart) the Legislature established far-reaching and significant reforms in the quality of academic preparation at the secondary level in response to growing public concern about the substandard performance of California's high school graduates on standard achievement tests.

More recently, the Legislature acknowledged its interest in improved retention and performance of community college students by requiring the development of a Board of Governors' "matriculation plan" for all colleges which would organize admission, assessment, guidance, placement, and retention functions into a coherent whole.

In the last legislative session, budgetary language and other statutes require attention to other aspects of preparation and participation for low-income and minority groups. Supplemental budget language required the public postsecondary segments, the State Department of Education, and CPEC to jointly develop a plan to implement enumerated state policy for all postsecondary equal education opportunity programs. The plan was to place emphasis in such programs, on secondary school preparation, and coordinated out-reach services. Assembly Bill 3775 (Chacon) required the establishment of a task force representing the public postsecondary institutions, state control agencies, and CPEC to assess existing services for EOPS transfer students and to offer recommendations to improve the EOPS transfer function.

ACR 63, also by Chacon, asks the respective boards of public postsecondary education, the association representing independent colleges, and the State Board of Education to work through a task force chaired by the Director of CPEC and to cooperatively adopt a plan that, on the basis of assessment of existing efforts, will do the following:

(1) Significantly strengthen the college preparation of low-income and underrepresented ethnic minority students in junior and senior high schools so that, by 1990, the income and ethnic composition of secondary school graduates eligible for admission to public four-year colleges is at least equal to or greater than the income and ethnic composition of secondary school graduates generally.

(2) Sufficiently expand and reorganize necessary academic and student support activities at the community colleges as well as expand the necessary cooperative activities by the four-year institutions so that, by 1990, the income and ethnic composition of students completing vocational technical programs or transferring from community colleges into four-year institutions is at least equal to the income and ethnic composition of students enrolling in community colleges.

(3) Sufficiently strengthen and reorganize the necessary academic and support services so that, by 1995, the income and ethnic composition of baccalaureate degree recipients from California's colleges and universities is at least equal to the income and ethnic composition of secondary school graduates in 1990.

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ACR 83 provides an ideal opportunity for postsecondary institutions to address, in a comprehensive planned fashion, the underpreparation and underparticipation of Blacks and Hispanics at various levels. This can be done in the context of the concern expressed by the Legislature that:

> "Unless increased numbers of ethnic minority and low-income people are educated at California's colleges and universities to be prepared to fill highly-skilled jobs, California will be unable to increase the supply of teachers from underrepresented groups and will have considerable difficulty meeting the challenges of future economic and technological growth."

In order to accomplish the task outlined in ACR 83, members of the CPEC Statutory Advisory Committee have agreed to serve as a policy advisory group to the project. That group met with a technical-level planning group on February 22 to begin the planning process. The time available to complete the plan is constrained in that the report to the Legislature is due June 30. The group agreed to develop and recommend, for adoption in principle by each of the governing bodies, a "master plan for educational equity." The plan would discuss the impact of current trends, review demographic pressures and underrepresentation, evaluate what has been learned from previous efforts, recommend a differentiation of responsibility among the segments, establish certain principles and priorities for action, and request specific implementation plans from each segment.

CPEC, through the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on ACR 83, and CSU, through the proposed establishment of a systemwide "Commission on Educational Equity," are each gearing up to respond systemwide to this planning opportunity.

The Board may wish to consider some options which dovetail with this comprehensive planning effort.

Future Board Action:

The Board of Governors may wish to highlight its concern with continued underrepresentation of Black and Hispanic students and to develop a focal point for the discussion of alternative ways to address the problem within the community colleges or in concert with others. Consistent with the Board's Basic Agenda emphasis on access a comprehensive research report assessing the impact of state policies and fiscal priorities on access and participation of minority students will be brought to the Board at its May meeting.

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APPENDIX A

TABLE 10

Ethnicity of California Public School Ninth Grade Students in 1979-80 and High School Graduates in 1982-83

	Ninth Graders 1979-80		Graduates 1982-83		Graduates as a Percent of Ninth Grade ("Persistence" Rate)	Non-Graduates[a] as a Percent of Ninth Grade ("Drop Out" Rate)
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	3,232	1.0%	1,936	0.8%	59.9%	40.1%
Filipino	4,335	1.3	4,127	1.6	95.2	4.8
Asian/Pacific Island	13,667	4.1	16,042	6.3	117.4	--
Black	34,936	10.4	23,228	9.1	66.7	33.3
Hispanic	69,748	20.8	46,081	18.1	66.1	33.9
White	209,291	62.4	163,470	64.1	78.1	21.9
Total	335,209	100.0%	254,944	100.0%	76.0%	24.0%

Sources: California State Department of Education, California Basic Educational Data System, 1981. California Postsecondary Education Commission, High School Curriculum Survey, 1984.

California Postsecondary Education Commission, "Eligibilty of California's 1983 High School Graduates for Admission to the State's Public Universities: A Report from the 1983 High School Eligibility Study," March 1985.

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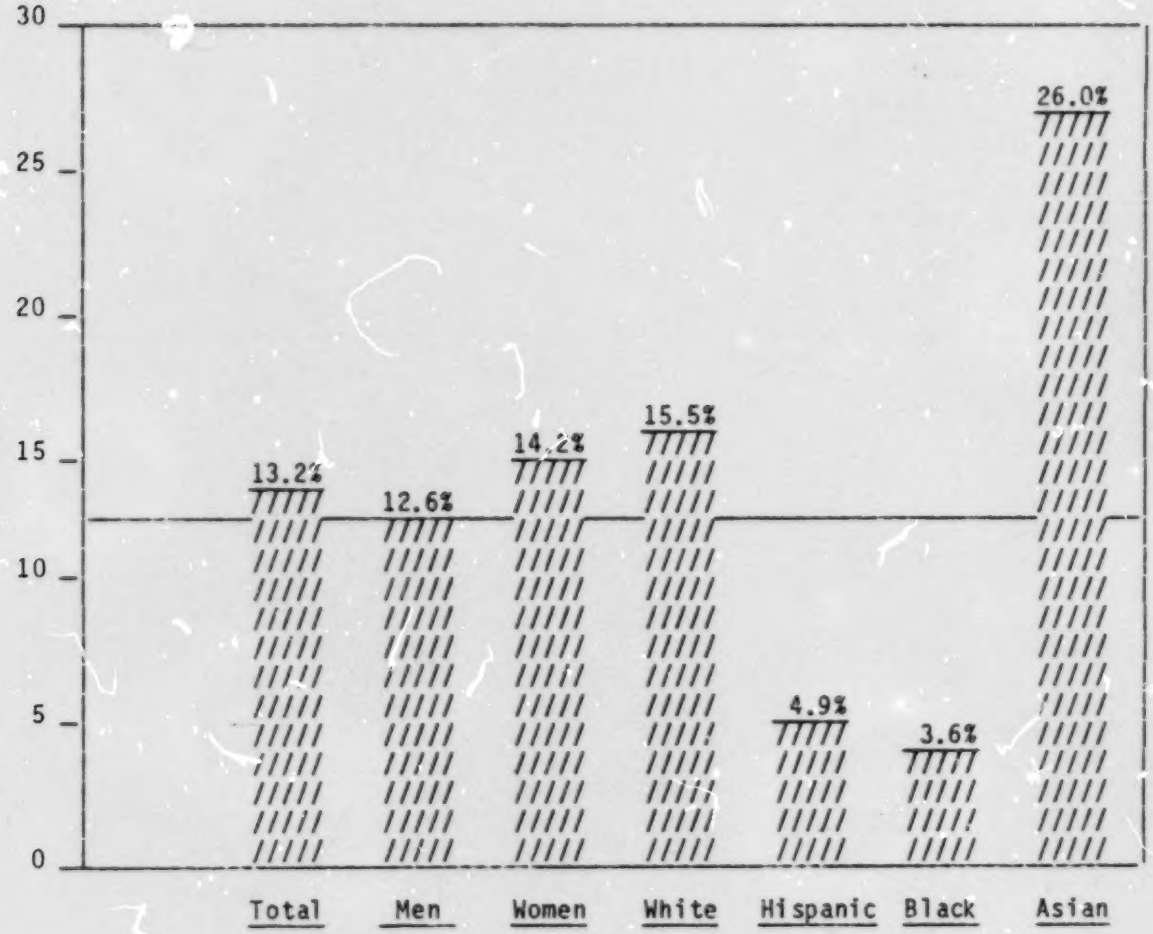
APPENDIX B

FIGURE 16

Estimated Eligibility Rates for Freshman Admission to the University of California of 1983 Graduates of California's Public High Schools, by Sex and Major Ethnic Group



Source: California Postsecondary Education Commission, "Population and Enrollment Trends: 1985-2000," March 1985.

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APPENDIX C

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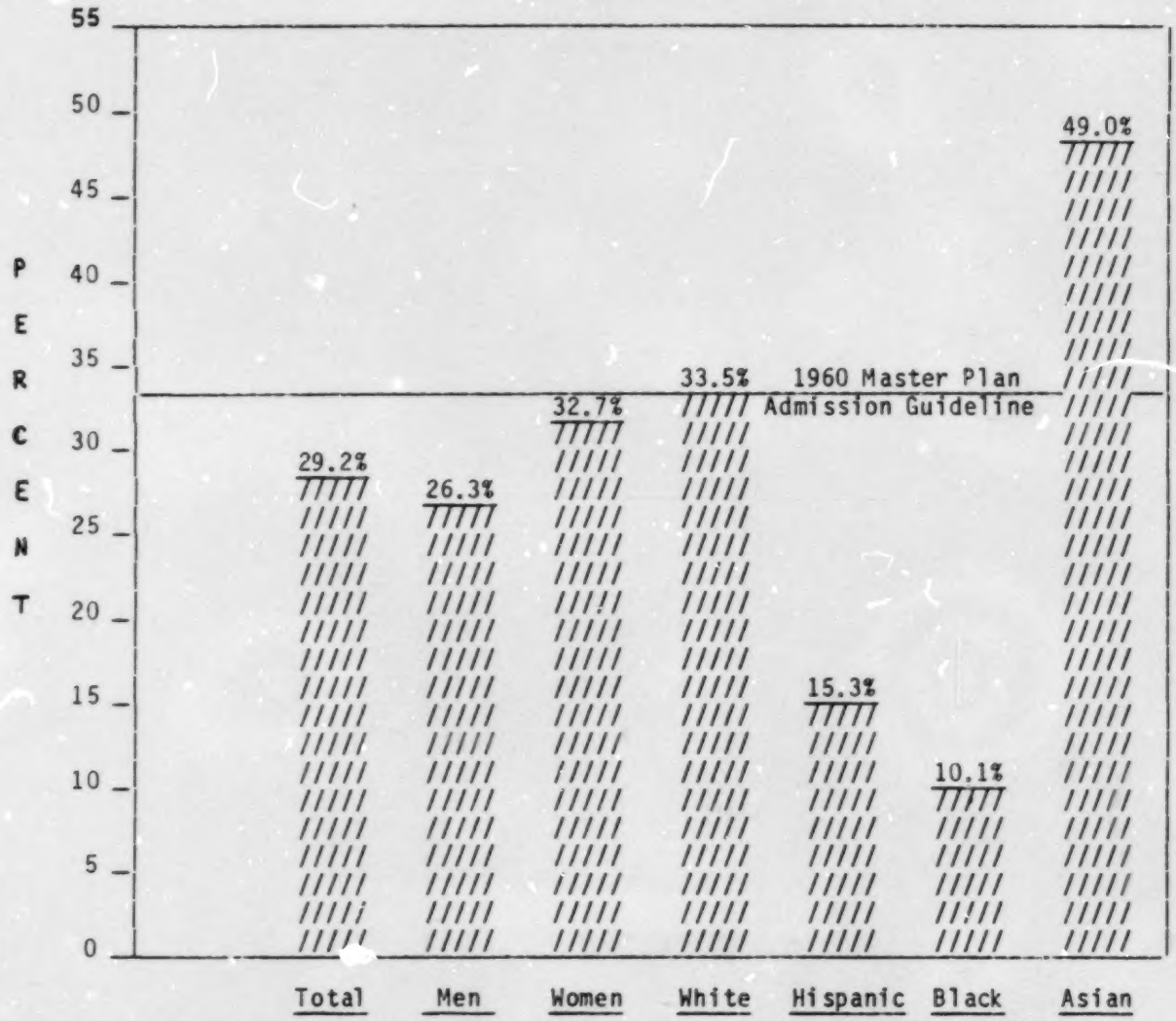
FIGURE 17

Estimated Eligibility Rates for Freshman Admission to the California State University of 1983 Graduates of California's Public High Schools, by Sex and Major Ethnic Group



Source: California Postsecondary Education Commission, "Population and Enrollment Trends: 1985-2000," March 1985.

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